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**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions**

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**Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance**

# Assistance to Mozambique following the devastating floods

## Report of the Secretary-General

## I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/96 L of 10 March 2000, by which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000, on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations and on the collaborative efforts of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system for mobilizing and coordinating humanitarian assistance and assistance required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure, in Mozambique, with a view to supporting the efforts of the Government of Mozambique.

2. The devastating floods in February and March 2000 in southern Mozambique triggered a massive outpouring of international support. Affected were the provinces of Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala and Manica, as well as Maputo City. An estimated 544,000 persons were displaced and 5 million affected. In addition, 699 were reported to have perished. The United Nations system played a vital role in stimulating, mobilizing and coordinating the assistance that was provided to Mozambique. The present report discusses the United Nations role in support of national efforts to respond to the disastrous floods.

3. Beginning in December 1999, heavy rains fell over Mozambique, reaching unprecedented levels by the end of the month. In early February 2000, the Umbeluzi, Incomati and Limpopo Rivers exceeded all known records and, on 25 February, when the river floods caused by Cyclone Eline reached Mozambique, the central and southern provinces of the country experienced the most extensive floods in more than 50 years.

4. The emergency hit a country which is among the 10 poorest of the world, with a poverty index of 70 per cent. It affected 12.1 per cent of the population, that is, 2.04 million people in five provinces; more than 700,000 of them required assistance. Among these, 500,000 were displaced by the floods and temporarily sheltered in over 100 camps set up by the Government.

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The impact of the floods on all sectors of the economy has been enormous: 10 per cent of the cultivated land was destroyed, while 90 per cent of the irrigation structure in the affected areas was damaged. More than 600 primary schools were either destroyed or severely damaged, as were health posts and hospitals. The World Bank estimates that direct losses amount to US $273 million, while lost production amounts to $247 million.

5. Despite its very limited means, the Government of Mozambique responded in a remarkable way to the emergency. Within the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), the operational arm of the Government in cases of emergencies, a coordination structure was set up with support from the United Nations system. Regular coordination meetings were organized by INGC and presided over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of government ministries, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations. INGC also organized regular press briefings and sectoral planning meetings.

6. Immediately following the second floods, on 28 February, the Secretary-General appointed Ross Mountain as his Special Humanitarian Envoy for Mozambique. Mr. Mountain arrived in Maputo on 1 March and spent two weeks working with the Government of Mozambique and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations country team in addressing the response to the disaster.

7. The Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team, with reinforcements from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and agency headquarters, worked in partnership with and in support of INGC and relevant line agencies. The World Food Programme (WFP) played a key role, coordinating relief logistics in the joint logistics cell established in INGC, in addition to food assistance. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) worked with their government counterpart ministries in the water, sanitation, health, shelter and education sectors.

8. At the request of the Government and the Resident Coordinator, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs fielded a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team immediately in response to the 12 February floods, and a prolonged UNDAC presence throughout the month of March in response to the second wave of floods. The teams were integral parts of the official coordination structure, supporting and assisting INGC and providing a relief coordination database. Several members of the teams were stationed in Beira to ensure an information link between ongoing operations and the capital. The coordination between civil international staff and military personnel from seven countries became a particularly important task of the UNDAC teams, who also coordinated an impressive number of military assets (at one stage, nearly 60 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft). Their services during the acute phase of the emergency were inestimable: overall, some 50,000 people were rescued. On 26 April, experts from both sides evaluated the collaboration and integration of military staff in a civilian structure throughout the period of the presence of the military assets, and unanimously considered it an exemplary success.

9. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDAC teams were also instrumental in preparing two major emergency appeals: on 23 February, the Government and the United Nations entities appealed for some $60 million for 300,000 flood victims. The impact of Cyclone Eline drastically increased those requirements, and $130 million was contributed by donors to the relief phase.

10. On 22 March, the Government and the United Nations entities launched a transitional appeal, seeking $100 million of additional emergency assistance for the benefit of more than 600,000 flood victims until the next agricultural season in September. That appeal was the result of an intensive collaborative effort between line ministries, United Nations entities — UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, (FAO), UNESCO, WHO and major non-governmental organizations. Its overall objective was to fill the gap between the short-term emergency relief required by the returning flood victims until rehabilitation projects could be designed, funded and implemented.

11. The International Conference on the Reconstruction of Mozambique, organized by UNDP with the Government of Mozambique in Rome on 3 and 4 May, succeeded in obtaining pledges of $453 million for the reconstruction. Donors were urged to

meet the outstanding resource requirements of that appeal in order to pave the way for the reconstruction efforts decided by the Conference.

12. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will continue to provide staffing support to INGC and to assist the Government and the United Nations Resident Coordinator with the coordination and monitoring tasks until the end of the transitional phase, in September 2000. This also includes NGO liaison officers, a field presence in Beira, and support to UNDP and FAO to coordinate the shelter, resettlement and agriculture components of the appeal, respectively.

### Context

13. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a human development index of 0.340 and a ranking of 169 out of the 174 countries surveyed in the 1999 Human Development Report prepared by UNDP. The country has received substantial international support since the completion of the peace process in December 1994, with annual pledges during the Consultative Group meetings averaging between $800 million and $1 billion. Multi-party elections in 1994 and 1999 won high praise from international observers, as well as from national observers, who participated in the last exercise, as evidence of the country's commitment to consolidating democracy. Economic growth since 1996 has been dramatic, ranging from 7 to 12 per cent per year, and the country seemed well on the way to recovery and development when disaster struck in the form of the unprecedented floods and their dramatic impact.

14. The coastline is more than 2,500 kilometres long, and Mozambique has nine river systems, which mainly rise in neighbouring countries. There is an October-March rainy season, and cyclones and floods are normal annual occurrences. Drought is also common, and Mozambique is sufficiently large that in some years there are droughts in some parts of the country and floods in others. In peacetime Mozambique, the Government turned its attention to putting in place a strong management system to control the country's vulnerability to natural disasters entailing the creation of a new oversight institution, the National Institute for Disaster Management (*Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades*), and the development of a national disaster mitigation policy.

15. The United Nations system has been a consistent partner to Mozambique throughout its various encounters with natural disasters, as occurred during this particular calamity. In reviewing the role of the United Nations in the context of these floods and their aftermath, the following points seem to emerge as salient to the coordination process, and contributed to mitigating the fallout on the affected populations:

(a) The Government led the response process, while United Nations actions were directed at supporting those efforts;

(b) Efforts by the United Nations and the Government built on earlier training, experience and preparation, activities that had earlier been supported by United Nations entities such as UNICEF, UNDP and WFP;

(c) The United Nations system mobilized resources quickly when a member State faced a disaster that was beyond its immediate ability to handle;

(d) The United Nations system established a disaster management team in Maputo comprising the country management team and technical focal points from each agency, while substantial numbers of extra staff were mobilized on short notice;

(e) International military forces allowed themselves to be coordinated by civilians and the United Nations in an unprecedented way;

(f) The Secretary-General appointed his first-ever special humanitarian envoy for a natural disaster.

## II. Floods disaster of 2000

### A. National capacity for emergency response

16. Since its independence in 1975, Mozambique and its partners in the international community have acquired substantial experience in dealing with the complex emergency in which the country found itself as a result of the 16 years of internal civil unrest, during which a number of natural and man-made disasters also struck. Response capacity improved with experience, and this was bolstered by the Government's decision, in the late 1990s, to strengthen the national institutional capacity to manage the impact of such occurrences.

17. The predecessor disaster planning and management unit was restructured and a new institute, INGC, was established under the continuing responsibility of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Both INGC and the first national disaster management policy were formally approved in June 1999. Among the United Nations entities, the country management team had reached consensus on designating WFP as the lead United Nations agency in Mozambique for disaster management. In that capacity, WFP had worked closely with the Government and other partners towards the preparation of the INGC statutes and the new policy document. One of the first actions of INGC was the establishment of a technical commission, with representatives from 10 ministries, in which, exceptionally WFP was invited to participate.

18. During 1999, INGC held two national workshops and a variety of training and simulation exercises, with the direct involvement of WFP and with support from UNDP. Particularly important was the involvement in this training of the fire brigade, the police and representatives of civil society, notably, the boy scouts, the Red Cross and a number of religious organizations, all of which subsequently made important contributions in the national response to the floods of 2000.

19. The relief operations linked to the floods in Inhambane Province in February 1999 had also been important for gaining experience. Indeed, INGC produced a calendar for 2000 with photographs of damage caused by the Inhambane floods, and distributed it to local leaders in flood-prone areas as a form of visual warning of the potential power of floods. UNICEF and WFP were the main United Nations bodies that had participated in those relief activities.

20. In terms of regional cooperation, the South African Air Force had provided helicopters for use in Mozambique during the 1996, 1997 and 1999 floods, building in the process good links with INGC, and gaining valuable experience of flying in Mozambique. South African military helicopters had also been used to transport people and material in the Mozambique elections in December 1999. It was not surprising, therefore, that South Africa became the first to provide air support during the floods of 2000.

21. As part of its regular cooperation programme with Mozambique, the Vulnerability Assessment Unit of WFP, which includes ministries, non-governmental organizations and FAO, had identified the 20 districts most vulnerable to food insecurity. As part of its Food Fund Development programme, WFP trained food aid monitors and the district authorities, began food-for-work projects and set up emergency food reserves. Some of the districts were in the flood area, and the food reserves, and the food aid monitors, were used effectively in the floods. WFP had also positioned a contingency reserve of 150 tons of food in Vilanculos, Inhambane Province, and this was used in the river Save relief operation in that Province and in neighbouring Sofala.

22. FAO has over the past eight years established within the Ministry of Agriculture an early warning system that monitors agricultural conditions. Early warning staff were used to estimate the amount of agricultural land affected by flooding and the need for seed for future seasons.

## B. Early warning

23. From September 1999, INGC, the National Meteorological Institute and the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum began to warn of early weather forecasts indicating an unusually heavy rainy season. In the September-December period, there were a number of front-page articles in the local press repeating that warning. In November 1999, there was a meeting for the Press and the international community to launch the INGC contingency plan for 1999-2000. That meeting was presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, who was accompanied by the United Nations Resident Coordinator. In November, the Ministry of Health instructed its provincial directorates to prepare for possible floods. Contingency stocks of medicines and implementation plans for staff response were developed.

## C. The floods

24. Heavy rains began early, disrupting the national elections, which were held from 3 to 5 December 1999, in several parts of the country. In northern and central Mozambique, the rainfall in October-December 1999 was below normal, but in the south it was high — 70 per cent above normal in Maputo and 25 per cent above normal in Xai Xai, Gaza Province. There were heavy rains in southern Mozambique and in neighbouring

South Africa and Swaziland in January, causing early but not otherwise abnormal flooding. There were flood crests on the Umbeluzi, Incomati and Limpopo Rivers between 17 and 23 January and some people were displaced. INGC mobilization teams in the area warned people of the likelihood of further flooding.

25. During the first week of February, the rains continued to be unusually heavy in southern Mozambique and began to cause some alarm. Within that period, southern and central Mozambique were hit by Cyclone Connie from 4 to 7 February. At Maputo international airport, rainfall on 6 February was a record 328 millimetres, and over the four-day period had reached 454 mm. There was substantial local damage, with houses washed away and roads damaged. An estimated 6,000 people were displaced and many more affected. The road linking Maputo City to the provincial capital city of Matola was cut and the road from Maputo and Matola to South Africa was also under water and impassable.

26. Cyclone Connie, moving very slowly across southern Mozambique and into Swaziland, South Africa, southern Zimbabwe and even Botswana, dropped record rainfalls. This caused new floods on the rivers into Mozambique. On 7 February the Incomati River was higher than it had ever been, and measuring equipment at the South African border was washed away. By 9 February, flooding on the Incomati had closed the main road (EN1) between Maputo and Xai Xai. The Incomati and Umbeluzi Rivers reached levels not seen since 1937. The town of Sabie (population 9,000) was evacuated and thousands of other people in rural areas were forced to move to high ground.

27. By 12 February, there was serious flooding in the Limpopo valley, especially in the cities of Chókwè (where flood waters reached the historic high level of 1977) and Xai Xai. Further north, flooding on the rivers Save and Buzi in central Mozambique displaced thousands of people. At that point, it was estimated that 100,000 people had been displaced and another 200,000 affected by the flooding.

28. Five South African helicopters and a similar number of fixed-wing aircraft arrived on 11 February. In the next nine days, they succeeded in rescuing 2,800 people. Four boats from the Mozambican navy rescued another 6,358 persons between 29 January and 23 February.

29. During the following 10 days, the Limpopo River remained high, but other rivers began to fall and people had started to return to their homes. However, by 17 February there were forecasts of another cyclone, Eline, which finally hit central Mozambique on 22 February (virtually destroying the town of Nova Mambone at the mouth of the river Save).

30. As Cyclone Eline moved inland, it caused heavy rain in central Mozambique, Zimbabwe and northern South Africa. The rain fell on already saturated ground and ran off quickly. The four INGC/UNDAC daily situation reports from 21to 24 February all warned of further Limpopo flooding; the 21 February report warned that increased floods may have a devastating impact. The Gaza provincial government began to evacuate its offices in the low part of Xai Xai, and prisoners were moved from the local jail.

31. An unprecedented flood crest moved down the Limpopo River from 25 to 27 February. By 1 March, flood waters in Xai Xai were 3 metres above the previously recorded high level. Similar flood crests moved down the Save and Buzi Rivers.

32. Flooding was at previously unknown levels, inundating areas that people normally treated as safe high ground. The Limpopo, at its widest point, was 60 km wide, flooding areas that had never been under water. People in the Limpopo, Save and Buzi River valleys were forced to take refuge in trees and on the roofs of buildings.

33. The flood surge down the Limpopo River on Saturday, 26 February, with water rising by 1.5 metres in four hours, and the rapid rise in water in the Save and Buzi Rivers, dramatically changed the picture. Rescue flights resumed on 27 February, and by 6 March, South African helicopters had rescued a further 11,591 people, Malawian helicopters saved 1,873, and other helicopters another 287. Mozambican military and Red Cross boats (many operated by military out of uniform) rescued a further 11,254 people. Several thousand more were rescued by fishermen and other individuals with small boats. Some people spent up to 10 days on roofs and in trees. Dramatic television pictures of people being saved, including the birth of baby Rosita while her mother was still stranded in a tree, were shown all over the world.

34. By the second week of March, most aircraft and a large number of boats had arrived, and the highly publicized rescue operation was nearing completion.

Yet, the continuing need for relief remained high. Nearly 550,000 people had been made homeless and were in more than 100 different and often inaccessible locations; many were in refugee camps, and at least three accommodation centres had populations between 30,000 and 60,000 each. Still other people were stranded in small groups on isolated areas of high ground. The need for food, shelter, water, improved sanitation, and health care was massive; however, virtually all roads and rail lines in the affected areas were closed, with bridges down or roads washed out or still flooded. There was no road link to the north bank of the Limpopo (Xai Xai and Chibuto) and all transport was by air or small boats trying to cross the flooded and fast-flowing river. Xai Xai airport remained closed, and an informal air traffic control and logistics coordination system was established at the Chibuto grass landing strip; dozens of planes landed daily and three daily commercial flights were established between Maputo and Chibuto. Further north, helicopters were taking food from a British Navy ship off the coast and dropping it to isolated groups of people along the Save River. Even this massive collective air force was overstretched, and there was some hunger in accommodation centres and isolated areas. Overall, the relief effort was effective, as few people died of hunger or disease, and most have now returned to their places of origin.

35. By late March, most of the aircraft had left and water levels had fallen in most areas. However, there had been heavy rains in mid-March, in part from tropical storm Gloria, and the Save and Buzi Rivers remained over flood level until late March. The Limpopo River remained above flood level until the end of April, closing some roads and continuing to prevent people from returning home. Several thousand people tried to return home in the third week of March, only to be forced out again when water levels rose again. People slowly returned home, but in mid-March, 300,000 remained displaced, most in accommodation centres, and it was only in mid-April that there was a sudden move home by large numbers of people. People returned to Chókwè on the south bank of the Limpopo even though the clean-up there had not been completed. By the end of May, some low-lying areas were still flooded, several thousand people were still homeless, and a few accommodation centres remained open. Furthermore, many people who had returned home required continued help and some could only be supplied by air. Some airlifts continued until the end of May, and no permanent road link to the north bank of the Limpopo and Xai Xai had been reopened by the end of May.

36. The floods displaced 544,000 people and caused at least 699 deaths, according to government figures. Despite the steady build-up and advance warnings, the floods were far worse than anyone expected, predicted or had experienced. In Chókwè, for example, the city government, health services, the management of the local irrigation system, the Red Cross, and WFP all had to evacuate their offices in great haste, leaving behind stocks and records, as water rose faster and higher than anyone thought possible. INGC, in its "worst case" scenario in its November 1999 plan, had predicted that up to 93,000 people might be displaced in Gaza Province; the actual number for Gaza Province alone was more than 250,000.

# III. Coordination of humanitarian assistance

## A. Response by the Government and United Nations partners

37. With increasing appreciation of the scale of the potentially growing disaster, the technical commission of INGC started meeting more regularly in mid-January and relief efforts began with the initial population displacement in late January. South Africa made a formal offer of air force helicopters in January, if Mozambique agreed to pay for the fuel. The first situation report on the Mozambique floods was prepared by WFP and issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on 26 January. Joint INGC/WFP missions visited some affected areas, and WFP was asked for food aid for people already displaced. A joint INGC/donor/ government/United Nations evaluation mission was planned for 7 February, but this was overtaken by events.

38. The exceptional rains in Maputo on 6 February triggered the first large response. On that day, the Foreign Minister began what were to be daily afternoon meetings in his office with the Prime Minister and three other ministers to coordinate the government response to the floods. The INGC technical commission, joined by the Red Cross and UNDP, met on 7 February. An initial report and appeal for funds was issued by the Government on 10 February.

39. On 8 February, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs telephoned the Maputo Resident Coordinator's office to offer the assistance of an UNDAC team. After discussions with INGC and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, this was accepted by the Government and a formal invitation was issued on 10 February. An UNDAC team of five people (the first of what were eventually to be three teams) arrived on Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13 February, and met with United Nations officials on Sunday. Its initial instructions were to assist with launching a United Nations inter-agency appeal, as well as to prepare reports and information for donors and to help to coordinate international assistance. With assistance from the Emergency Response Division of UNDP, a coordination centre was set up in INGC, with equipment and staff.

40. Normally, UNDAC teams work from United Nations offices, and WFP, the lead United Nations agency on disaster management in Mozambique, had already prepared office space and computers for the team. This was used for the first day. But in an unusual move, the Resident Coordinator decided that the team should be in the INGC office, and the move took place on 15 February. The UNDAC team then received support from the Resident Coordinator's office and from the UNDP emergency fund. One member of the team commented: "We always work in support of the United Nations Coordinator, but the way we were able to work quickly with the Government was quite unprecedented".

41. UNICEF and WFP diverted human and financial resources and supplies from existing stocks to help flood victims. UNICEF supported government and non-governmental organizations to begin repairs of water pipes and provided water bladders for refugees housed in schools and communities with no access to potable water. UNICEF and WFP began to coordinate some donors meetings, and helped organize assessment flights on 11 and 12 February. UNICEF also put three experts into the Ministry of Health and the Maputo provincial directorate of health. On 16 February a flight from Italy brought in 40 tons of medical supplies from UNICEF and high-protein biscuits from WFP.

42. WFP began to effectively coordinate food relief and this was clearly expected by other donors. WFP also began moving most of its own food to Palmeira (70 km north of Maputo City), the northern-most point at which the road was passable and where there was warehouse space and maize milling capacity; planes and helicopters were able to land on the road to take food further north. Helicopters were also carrying food south from Maputo. The small airport at Xai Xai was flooded, and planes began to use the grass landing strip at nearby Chibuto.

43. UNDP and the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator quickly organized computers, cellular telephones, cars and so on, and by 16 February, the UNDAC team was fully operational inside INGC. During the week, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs organized a relief flight carrying supplies from its warehouse in Pisa, in response to the government appeal of 10 February.

44. The UNDAC team stressed the importance of open meetings to bring together government, donors and operational agencies. The first of what were to become daily INGC/UNDAC briefing and coordination meetings took place on 17 February. These were open to all, and government representatives from the sectoral working groups reported on their activities.

45. The aircraft fleet slowly expanded, with three more aircraft (one hired by WFP) and an additional helicopter in operation by 20 February. On 22 February, two Malawi military helicopters started to fly from Beira in the centre of Mozambique and two UNICEF-hired passenger helicopters from Maputo.

46. By this time, however, the road to South Africa was already open and donor interest was beginning to wane. The United Nations system played an important role in keeping donors interested.

47. Following the establishment of improved systems in INGC and the launch on 23 February of the first international appeal on emergency relief and rehabilitation, the UNDAC team left on 24 February. With their departure, INGC took over running the daily briefing and coordination meetings.

48. On 29 February, the Secretary-General named the Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at Geneva as his Special Humanitarian Envoy to Mozambique for the floods, and he arrived in the country the next day. His appointment made clear to both the Government of Mozambique and donors the high degree of seriousness accorded by the United Nations system to the unfolding floods situation. The Special Humanitarian Envoy made significant and successful efforts in Mozambique

to mobilize international support for flood relief. He was important in encouraging bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations to get involved and to participate in INGC coordination. One United Nations official in Maputo commented: "His rank was really important. People want to meet a special envoy of the Secretary-General and this made people more anxious to join his team". His high rank was similarly important in encouraging the military to join the established coordination process.

49. The importance the United Nations gave to the disaster was backed up by a statement made by the President of the Security Council on 6 March and a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 March (54/96) calling for the Secretary-General to continue "mobilizing and coordinating" humanitarian assistance and support for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. There were also three high-level visits to Mozambique by senior United Nations officials — the Executive Director of UNICEF, the Deputy Director of WFP and an Under-Secretary-General — all of which were used to beneficial ends in contacts with the Government and donors in calling attention to the need for continued support to the emergency.

50. During the two weeks he was in Mozambique, the Special Humanitarian Envoy was the senior United Nations official and he presided over the special disaster management team. His rank enabled the Special Humanitarian Envoy to take decisions in collaboration with the United Nations agencies on the ground, and this added urgency and flexibility into the United Nations system in Maputo.

51. UNDAC teams are intended to be rapid response teams mainly for "sudden onset natural disasters"; they normally arrive quickly and stay for only two weeks. The presence of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mozambique was unusual not only because it was working within INGC, but also because of the second and then a third team, which arrived on 10 March. UNDAC had originally not planned to send a third team, but it was requested by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, in part at the request of donors who felt that the presence of the UNDAC teams ensured smoother operation of the relief effort. The third team also helped set up databases, prepare a new appeal, and build up the Beira INGC. But the third team was probably more important as a reassurance to the rapidly growing donor community than for any concrete actions. The importance of the United Nations system in mediating between donors and the Government and in ensuring that bilateral and private donors feel more informed should not be underestimated.

## B. Coordinating United Nations assistance

52. The United Nations system in Mozambique was one of the first to go through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework exercise as part of the Secretary-General's reform programme. The evolving experience in, and commitment to, working together served the system well during the most difficult days of the floods period. It is notable how often it is commented that in that crisis the United Nations system acted more like a team and less like a set of individual agencies. It was therefore operationally significant that the link with INGC was the Resident Coordinator's office, and not a specific United Nations entity such as UNDP or WFP.

53. Within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, a country management team had been created and a United Nations Resident Coordinator's office established. The country management team was quickly used as the basis of a disaster management team, which also included the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the sectoral focal points. The Resident Coordinator's office supported the teams sent by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A Web site had been created in 1999 for the United Nations in Mozambique, and this quickly became a main site for flood information and was, at the peak, updated several times a day; in March 2000, 3,448 people from 58 countries visited the Web site.

54. The United Nations mobilized more than 200 extra people at the peak of the relief effort. As well as UNDAC, most United Nations agencies brought in experts and additional people from offices abroad, while United Nations Volunteers were transferred from other activities inside Mozambique to support flood relief efforts. Local staff were hired both by United Nations agencies and to support INGC, and there were many local volunteers.

55. For the purpose of coordinating relief efforts, sector working groups were created to deal with activities relating to food supply, health and nutrition,

water and sanitation, shelter, accommodation centres and non-food relief items, education and agriculture. At the request of UNDP, a mine action working group was established and reports from the group were then included in the regular INGC briefing meetings. The sector working groups contained government, United Nations and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations and met frequently, some meeting every day during the following months, and were used for coordination and to sort out technical problems. The two operational agencies, WFP and UNICEF, played the largest role on the ground.

### 1. Food supplies

56. From 11 February to 29 May, WFP distributed 12,000 tons of foodstuffs, mostly maize, but also beans, oil, sugar, salt and high-energy biscuits, to 590,000 beneficiaries located at 259 different sites in five provinces. WFP also organized kitchen sets for 20,000 families. To ensure geographic coverage, a total of five outposts were opened. Of the total food delivered, 33 per cent was moved by air transport. Fifteen non-governmental organizations, both local and international, have ensured food distribution to the main camps. Local authorities have also played a critical role in food deliveries in isolated areas. WFP food monitors and social mobilizers have been key to ensuring beneficiary registration, enhancing the role of women, conducting monitoring and field assessments, and developing recovery plans through food for work and supplementary feeding. In addition to food aid coordination and operations, WFP provided technical staff and tools to map vulnerable areas to determine the number of affected persons and hectares lost to flood damage.

### 2. Water and sanitation

57. UNICEF provided coordination and resource support to the government and local and international non-governmental organizations in ensuring access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the accommodation centres. To reduce vulnerability to cholera and diarrhoeal diseases, UNICEF organized animators and drama groups to perform in camps and accommodation centres to teach people about sanitation and hygiene in crowded conditions. It purchased and distributed 44,000 sets of buckets and soap so that people could wash their hands. It also distributed 352,000 packets of water purification powder (containing a flocculent to clear the mud and chlorine to purify the water). Government and non-governmental organizations also distributed 500,000 UNICEF oral rehydration salt sachets. The impact was shown by the fact that cholera and diarrhoeal diseases were effectively controlled in accommodation centres.

58. UNICEF also helped with rehabilitating water and sanitation systems in two damaged cities, Chókwè and Xai Xai. UNICEF worked closely with national and international non-governmental organizations and, in the clean-up of Chókwè, with the Mozambican military; in those two cities, UNICEF provided basic tools such as 1,500 shovels, 600 wheelbarrows and 3,000 heavy-duty rubber gloves. In Chókwè, the road to the rubbish dump was repaired and reopened.

### 3. Health and education

59. Malaria became a serious problem among displaced people because of the flooding and proliferation of mosquito breeding sites, coupled with a reduction in immunity levels in displaced populations caused by inadequate nutrition and increased stress. To slow the increase in malaria cases, WHO and UNICEF provided technical support and supplies for intensified malaria-control activities, including spraying, health education and the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets and malaria drugs.

60. Support in the form of vaccines, autodestruct needles and syringes, cold chain equipment, transportation and technical assistance was provided by UNICEF to the Ministry of Health to carry out an emergency vaccination campaign against measles, meningitis and neonatal tetanus among displaced communities. UNFPA worked to provide young pregnant women with medications and services, in and out of accommodations centres, to support maternal care.

61. WHO brought in a team to help the Ministry of Health with its planning for the crisis, conducted rapid needs assessments, and worked on malaria, health education and mental health plans. WHO also supplied cholera drugs, emergency kits of drugs, communications equipment, and play equipment for children.

62. The Government stressed the importance of children returning to school as quickly as possible. UNICEF and UNESCO, having agreed to work together, assisted with a rapid needs assessment.

UNICEF procured learning and teaching materials for 670 schools and 200,000 primary schoolchildren affected by the floods, and provided basic cleaning materials for 1,300 classrooms affected by flood waters. Fifty large tents were flown in from Kosovo to provide temporary classrooms.

63. To support work in Gaza Province, UNICEF opted to deploy four technicians to the Gaza provincial government health, public works and education directorates respectively, as opposed to setting up a sub-office in Xai Xai.

### 4. Agriculture

64. FAO provided technical assistance to the programme to conduct initial agricultural production assessments and supply seeds and tools to people returning home. FAO brought in a number of specialists to work with the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct assessments, formulated a database of non-governmental organization distribution plans (ensuring the communication of that information), organized seed coordination, and completed agricultural production forecasts. On 6 March, FAO fielded an emergency coordinator to technically assist the emergency group of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure a coordinated emergency intervention for the agricultural sector in flooded districts.

### 5. Shelter, accommodation centres and non-food relief items

65. UNDP supported the Government in its coordination function on shelter and acted as the focal point for the shelter working group. The group brought together representatives from the Government, national and international non-governmental organizations, donors, and other United Nations agencies. The working group became a forum for discussions on strategic aspects of the resettlement process. Guidelines for resettlement were developed, which were issues jointly prepared by the Government and the United Nations. A senior staff member in the country office was designated to lead the group, while UNDP funded the recruitment of local and international personnel to support the work of the group and INGC was supported directly to establish a database on accommodation centres and non-food relief items. UNDP also acted as a channel for donor funding for selected activities in support of community and public building rehabilitation.

66. In mid-March, the World Bank fielded a team of 20 people to do a damage assessment and look at reconstruction, and in April, approved $30 million in balance-of-payments support and reallocated $2.5 million in quick dispersing funds for road repair.

67. Even agencies without representation in Maputo contributed. The United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) sent teams to Mozambique to work with the Government in assessing the impact of the floods and designing plans for reconstruction.

### 6. Mine action

68. A major development problem for Mozambique is the challenge of liberating the country from the estimated 700,000 to 900,000 landmines and unexploded ordnance strewn throughout the country. Of the provinces affected by the floods, Maputo and Inhambane are considered heavily mined, while parts of Gaza, Manica and Sofala Provinces are also mined. Despite a sustained increase in donor funding for mine clearance activities, only a relatively small percentage of the total land area mined has been cleared. A level one survey to provide a definitive assessment of the landmine situation will be completed in 2001. In the meantime, concerns grew that the flood waters might result in the movement of undiscovered mines, with the potential for endangering the lives of aid workers and persons returning home. Accordingly, and in order to ensure an immediate and concerted response to assess the implications that the floods could have for mine action, and to facilitate the efficient use of existing and new resources, UNDP assisted the National Demining Institute (IND) to put in place an emergency response mechanism. A mine action emergency group was formed comprising IND, representatives of the main mine clearance operators (Handicap International, Norwegian People's Aid and the UNDP-supported Accelerated Demining Programme) and interested donors. The group developed a 10-point action plan and approved the designation of priorities and use of resources. As a result, it was possible to complete aerial and on-the-ground surveys of flooded areas, and mine education for aid workers and persons in accommodation centres in known mined localities. UNICEF, as the designated United Nations agency for mine education, allocated funds to Handicap International for completing activities in this area. A

comprehensive assessment to determine the number of dislodged mines will be completed under the auspices of the umbrella project developed by the working group for the management of flood-related mine action. UNDP also worked with IND in the preparation of the issues paper on mine action, which was included in the conference document that the Government presented at the International Conference on Reconstruction, which was held in Rome in May.

### 7. Air operations

69. With United Nations agencies and up to 100 non-governmental organizations and 2,500 foreign personnel working in the field and up to 56 aircraft in the air, the need for coordination was clear. A Joint Logistics Operation Centre (JLOC) began operation in INGC on 3 March. JLOC was headed by WFP on behalf of the United Nations system but it was clearly part of INGC and the government coordination system. Any agency that wanted material or people flown the next day had to present a request to JLOC by 1300 hours, when it held a meeting to set priorities. The priority shipping list was taken to Maputo airport where a meeting of all operators (mostly military) took place at 1500 hours. That meeting was presided over by WFP, and operators portioned out the list of supplies and people to be transported. A similar arrangement was established in Beira, with UNDAC support, to serve the Buzi and Save areas. The military forces agreed to be coordinated by the United Nations because it was seen as neutral.

70. According to UNDAC and to military officials, this was an unprecedented arrangement in a flood disaster. The use of JLOC was a lesson learned from complex emergencies that usually involve military actions, and this was its first use in a natural disaster. Also exceptionally in a natural disaster, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs sent someone from its Military and Civil Defence Unit to Maputo to help to coordinate the use of military assets; in the past (for example during Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998), such a liaison person had remained in Geneva.

71. The various air forces cooperated and accepted tasking instructions from civilians. By 26 May, 9,615 hours had been flown (5,398 by military aircraft), carrying 11,789 tons of cargo and 13,911 passengers — in addition to rescue and reconnaissance.

## C. Coordinating with donor partners and appeals for funding

72. On Saturday, 26 February, with embassies in Maputo and the United Nations alert to the developing crisis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation asked the United Nations to convene an urgent consultative meeting of donor multilateral partners in the INGC offices on Sunday morning, 27 February, which he presided over. He also moved his daily 8 a.m. ministerial meeting to the INGC office, before moving on to chair daily 11 a.m. open INGC meetings.

73. The international response to the new, 26 February, flood was extremely positive. There was huge international fund-raising and volunteers and non-governmental organizations poured in. Eleven different air forces provided aircraft, in addition to those hired privately. At the peak, there were 56 aircraft in operation and more than 1,000 foreign military personnel in Mozambique. There were also more than 200 boats donated or lent to Mozambique.

74. The first week after the new floods was chaotic, with resources flowing in at an unprecedented level. In that difficult period, much of the coordination was done by United Nations staff working behind the scenes. For example, a WFP staff member, working at Maputo airport attempted, with a cellular telephone, to control the logistics for the rapidly expanding relief effort. The United Nations country team itself discovered that it had limited senior staff experienced in disaster management, and that there were no United Nations contingency or preparedness plans. However, the experience of agency heads working together on the country management team made it easier for them to respond jointly to the natural disaster.

75. By Monday, 6 March, enhanced coordination with all partners was needed as attendance at the daily coordination meeting had swelled, and from 6 March the meetings were presided over by the Foreign Minister. The daily meetings served to inform people about the progress of the relief effort and of the most pressing needs. A new Joint Logistics Operations Centre was opened within INGC on 3 March.

76. The Government issued its initial information document and an appeal for US$ 2.7 million for emergency relief supplies on 10 February. Based on that appeal, on 11 February, WFP and UNICEF both issued agency appeals.

77. The response, however, was limited, and 10 days later WFP and UNICEF had received only $1.4 million; WFP was concerned that it could not pay the continued costs of keeping South African planes and helicopters flying. In Maputo, there is criticism from both government and United Nations officials about the slowness of donors to respond, while at least one major donor has complained that the United Nations system did not say loudly enough that there was a need for more funding for helicopters and that the message did not get through to its capital.

78. The formal letter from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the Government on 11 February stated that the Office could assist the Government with launching the United Nations inter-agency appeal, and that was seen as a major part of its task in Mozambique. The Government of Mozambique had traditionally produced government-led or joint appeals, and assumed that would happen again, while the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs assumed that its position was set out in its letter. As progress was made towards a 23 February appeal to donors, those assumptions led to some misunderstandings as the first draft was entitled "United Nations inter-agency appeal for emergency relief and initial rehabilitation". It called for contributions to be made to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or a United Nations agency and said money channelled to the Office would be spent in coordination with the relevant United Nations system agencies. After consultation with the Government, however, the final version was entitled "International appeal of the Government of Mozambique for emergency relief and initial rehabilitation in collaboration with the United Nations agencies" and called for contributions to be made to INGC or the Red Cross, through bilateral means, or to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and also stated that money channelled through the Office would be spent in coordination with the Government and the relevant United Nations system agencies.

79. The most important obstacle facing the Government and the UNDAC/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs team occurred because the team felt it could include assistance for relief and initial rehabilitation, which would be channelled through the United Nations system. The Government expressed its desire that even initial rehabilitation required repairs of the breaks in the roads, for which there was no partner United Nations agency, and wanted to include this in the appeal. The final document was a composite, with the first three pages being the "Government of Mozambique international appeal" for US$ 65 million, of which $44.3 million was for infrastructure, $8.1 million for other government requests, and $13.6 million for United Nations system assistance. Most of the rest of the document detailed those requests for which there was a partner United Nations agency.

80. By 1 March, just days after the bigger flood, $17 million had been pledged. On 6 March, WFP issued a new appeal. By 20 March, total pledges to government and United Nations agencies had exceeded $100 million, although not all of this was delivered.

81. Meanwhile, the third team fielded by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs included two people sent to draft an updated donor appeal, taking into account that the floods had become much worse since the 23 February appeal and that people would need to be helped at least through August.

82. By this time, the Government had accepted the invitation of the Government of Italy to host an international conference on reconstruction, initially proposed for April, but held on 3 and 4 May. In the meantime, it had become clear that further assistance was required for the emergency phase of the floods response. Nonetheless, the Government was concerned that a third international appeal for emergency aid in addition to the upcoming Consultative Group meeting could be confusing to potential donors. When it was decided to launch the updated international appeal for emergency relief and rehabilitation, the Government agreed on the condition that United Nations and government assessed needs were equally represented. The 22 March appeal had the same title as the 24 February appeal, but its form was different. The appeal was for $100 million above that already pledged, and included in the body of the report both government and United Nations projects. As well as including government requests for the rehabilitation of roads and buildings, it also included a much larger request for agricultural support, reflecting the government view that there was a need to act quickly to help farmers return to production. On 22 March, UNICEF issued its own agency appeal.

## D. Coordinating with non-governmental partners

83. Overall, the INGC coordination mechanism and the daily meetings worked to help coordinate the activities of non-governmental organizations. When international non-governmental organizations and other donors arrived unannounced or without local contacts, they were simply sent to INGC and invited to the briefing meetings, which served to integrate their activities and geographic coverage. The Ministry of Health required that all non-governmental organizations carrying out health activities be registered. Indeed, one of the most useful aspects of integrating the UNDAC teams into INGC was that there was no alternative coordination point.

84. In an effort to improve non-governmental organization coordination, the United Nations Special Envoy met with a local non-governmental organization consortium and the national Red Cross to devise ways for enhanced collaboration. Those efforts resulted in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs funding additional non-governmental organization liaison officers in Maputo and Beira to act as the focal points for non-governmental organization coordination, working alongside both the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and INGC. While most non-governmental organizations were meeting with INGC and trying to coordinate efforts, there were some problems with those non-governmental organizations that refused to participate in a coordinated fashion.

## E. Coordinating with the Press

85. Unquestionably, the extensive press coverage of the floods was instrumental in generating the large response. The United Nations system played a central role in keeping the flood on the world's television screens.

86. The first television teams in Maputo were BBC and SABC in early February, and they were assisted by WFP and UNICEF. BBC was in Chókwè at the time of the 26 February flood. Later, journalists and television crews from ITN, CNN and many other agencies also came to Mozambique. The now-famous rescue footage on television was particularly important in drawing international attention to the flood. WFP and UNICEF committed a significant amount of staff time to the television crews and also helped to ensure that they had space on helicopters. From mid-February to mid-April, WFP had five additional press people in Maputo, UNDP had one headquarters-deployed communications officer, while other agencies used in-country information staff. This was productive and successful, although it created some tension with other United Nations agencies.

87. When the Secretary-General's Special Humanitarian Envoy arrived, he was accompanied by a press officer. He was available for interviews, and statements from a special envoy of the Secretary-General carry more weight than those from other United Nations officials. The availability of the Resident Coordinator for press briefings and interviews (BBC, CNN and others), as well as the heads of United Nations specialized agencies such as WHO and UNESCO, was also important for keeping the media informed.

88. In the first week after the 26 February floods, with the chaos at the airport, journalists had to negotiate with individual pilots to obtain space on aircraft. But with the operation of JLOC from 3 March, this too was more coordinated. The United Nations system and JLOC gave high priority to ensuring that the press had seats on planes and helicopters.

89. Journalists were able to fly in from South Africa, stay at a hotel in Maputo, get out to the flood sites during the day and return to Maputo at night. The United Nations facilitation of the media's work, the availability of its senior staff for briefings and interviews and its ability to generate new information kept this story on the front pages and on the television screens. There is no doubt that the huge media coverage triggered the massive support for Mozambique.

## F. Reconstruction

90. The Government of Mozambique appealed for $449.5 million at the International Reconstruction Conference held in Rome on 3 and 4 May. The United Nations system played a different role than it had in earlier appeals. The Government of Mozambique accepted the offer and asked the United Nations system in Maputo to support the conference. UNDP was invited to act as the secretariat for the conference. Locally, the UNDP office was reinforced with staff

provided by the Emergency Response Division with resources mobilized by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Department for International Development and from Headquarters to strengthen the country office at that time. Together, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office and the expanded country office team were instrumental in working with government representatives in putting in place the arrangements for the Rome Conference. Representatives from United Nations agencies worked with their national counterparts to compile data and develop the activities that were eventually included in the reconstruction document that was presented in Rome. The World Bank fielded a technical team, which worked to prepare the first comprehensive damage assessment. Those reports were made available in draft form to the United Nations disaster management team, which included a World Bank representative. The findings of the report were subsequently updated by the Government and integrated into the Rome Conference document. In contrast to the two international emergency and rehabilitation appeals, the Government took the lead in the preparation of the Conference document. It established a special drafting committee, under the leadership of the former Minister of Planning and Finance and the current Minister for Transport and Communications, drawing on the United Nations system reports and the World Bank assessment, substantiated by its own subsequent and updated information.

91. UNDP was designated conference secretariat and a team was established with members from UNDP, including Emergency Response Division staff and consultants, the Resident Coordinator's office, and the Government. They designed and organized the conference, with inputs from UNDP headquarters, and with final decisions being made by the Mozambican Council of Ministers. The United Nations Office for Project Services in Rome, at the specific request of the UNDP Administrator, was contracted to organize hotel and travel arrangements for the Mozambican delegation. All other logistics arrangements were covered by UNDP, through the senior adviser, for the organization of round tables and donor conferences based in Geneva, and decisions were taken by a joint United Nations-government pre-conference team based in the Mozambican Embassy in Rome. The entire United Nations country team went to Rome in support of the conference and together finalized the United Nations country team's intervention presented at the conference by the Resident Coordinator.

92. In the end, the Rome meeting was a joint Mozambique-United Nations conference co-chaired by the Foreign Minister of Mozambique and the UNDP Administrator, with a government reconstruction programme document. The conference was successful, with pledges totalling an estimated $452.9 million, slightly in excess of the amount indicated in the conference document.

## G. Ongoing assistance

93. The television crews and most of the displaced persons have gone home, most of the water has drained away, but United Nations involvement has not ended. The United Nations has played and continues to play four important roles.

94. First, was the United Nations role in helping to prepare the Rome Conference, which ensured that Mozambique would have sufficient resources for the daunting reconstruction programme.

95. The second role was the expressed desire to learn lessons from the flood and the response to it, and the need to develop a local United Nations disaster plan. There will be a special evaluation and a lessons learned seminar in Maputo in July.

96. Third is the need to continue to support people who have been affected by the flood. In the two southern provinces of Maputo and Gaza, 70 per cent of the cropped land was lost to floods. Perhaps 10 per cent of Mozambique's agricultural production has been lost for this year, and some farmers will take two or even three years to recover. This means that some farmers will continue to need food aid for up to a year, and WFP needs another $5 million to provide that assistance. WFP is making arrangements with non-governmental organizations to carry out food distribution and food-for-work projects. Further support is also needed for seeds and tools, of which 100,000 kits have already been distributed to peasant farmers returning home, some of this through the Italian-funded UNDP-assisted project with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. WHO is developing cholera and malaria control plans. UNICEF is continuing to support the Government to re-establish health services, schools, access to potable water and sanitation, and community-based nutrition information

systems. UNESCO continues to work with the Ministry of Education to place the issue of emergency preparation and response more centrally in its planning activities. A UNESCO educational architect is at the disposal of the Ministry as part of its technical assistance package offered by its Director-General. UNESCO will also work with the Ministry in ensuring an emergency component of the proposed education broadcasting capability. In addition, a large-scale programme for the rehabilitation of public sector offices and buildings is under way, with funding being channelled through UNDP by the United Kingdom Department for International Development. An important aspect of the United Nations role is to ensure that donors do not forget Mozambique, now that the flood waters have receded.

97. Fourthly, the United Nations agencies will play a role in improving disaster management and mitigation and in reducing vulnerability. All of the United Nations agencies in Mozambique will be involved in strengthening INGC, meteorology and other early warning systems; in improving mapping and risk assessment; in resettling people away from flood-prone areas and reducing vulnerability; in other projects such as food for work to improve flood defences; and in reconstruction. The specialized agencies, which had a lower profile during the relief effort, will be particularly important.

## IV. Preliminary conclusions

98. The Mozambique floods of February and March 2000 were unusual both in the way they evolved and in the huge international response to them. Early in the crisis the United Nations was important in generating support from the donor community. But when the crisis became very serious and highly publicized, the United Nations was asked by the Government to help coordinate an almost overwhelming outpouring of international support. Now that the floods may be forgotten outside Mozambique, the United Nations again returns to the position of mobilizing support.

99. In this process, a number of unusual features of United Nations system involvement and partnership can be noted:

(a) Reinforcing the central role of the Government in disaster management, and not creating parallel or alternative systems. The main work of the United Nations system was behind the scenes, but its presence and activities increased the confidence both of the Government and of the donor community;

(b) The naming of a special envoy of the Secretary-General, which raised the profile of the disaster at a key time;

(c) The similar importance of having someone as senior and popular as the Foreign Minister taking hands-on responsibility for disaster management;

(d) The extended role of UNDAC;

(e) The effectiveness of the United Nations system reform and the office of the Resident Coordinator;

(f) The ability to build on past programmes for disaster management and mitigation and the ability of United Nations agencies to integrate emergency responses into the regular programming structures and operations;

(g) The willingness of military forces to be coordinated by civilians supported by the United Nations.

100. Mozambique already had a disaster management system and an operating tradition into which the United Nations system could feed. But this disaster was of a magnitude far beyond anything with which the Government could reasonably have expected to cope. The United Nations system showed it could mobilize support quickly and yet was able to work with and through the Government. While lessons learned will provide the Government and the United Nations with valuable information for better preparedness, response and improved coordination mechanisms in the future, the unusually strong Government/United Nations partnership will be embraced in future initiatives, most notably the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Mozambique for the period 2002-2006.

# Annex

## Mozambique floods, 2000: chronology of events

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| **1999** | |
| November | INGC contingency plan for 1999/00 rainy season launched |
| **2000** | |
| 17-23 January | Flood crests on Umbeluzi, Incomati and Limpopo Rivers in southern Mozambique |
| 26 January | First situation report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the Mozambique floods, prepared by WFP |
| 4-7 February | Cyclone Connie hits central and southern Mozambique and then moves on to drop record rainfall over Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana |
| 6 February | 328 mm of rain is recorded at Maputo international airport |
| | First daily meeting is chaired by Mozambique Foreign Minister with other government ministers to coordinate government response to the floods |
| 7 February | Incomati River reaches all-time high |
| | Roads between Maputo and Matola and onwards to South Africa and Swaziland are cut |
| 8 February | The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs offers a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team |
| 9 February | Floods on the Incomati cut the main national highway (EN1) between Maputo and Xai Xai. Umbeluzi River floods |
| 10 February | The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs offer of a UNDAC team formally accepted by the Government of Mozambique |
| | Government report on the floods and appeal for US$ 2.7 million is issued |
| 11 February | Arrival of first South African aircraft (5 helicopters and 5 fixed-wing aircraft) |
| | WFP and UNICEF issue appeals |
| 12 February | Limpopo River floods, inundating cities of Chókwè and Xai Xai |
| | Save and Buzi Rivers in the centre of Mozambique flood |
| | UNDAC team of five arrives in Maputo |
| 13 February | UNDAC team meets with Government and United Nations |

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| 15 February | UNDAC team moves to offices within INGC |
| 16 February | UNDAC team fully operational, with computers and cellular telephones provided by UNDP |
| 17 February | First daily INGC/UNDAC briefing and coordination meeting, open to all |
| 19 February | French military C160 arrives in Maputo to join the airlift operations |
| 21 February | Gaza provincial government evacuates offices in lower part of Xai Xai |
| 21-24 February | INGC/UNDAC daily situation reports warn of fresh Limpopo floods |
| 22 February | Cyclone Eline hits central Mozambique before moving inland over Zimbabwe and northern South Africa |
| | Two Malawian helicopters arrive in Beira to operate in the Save valley |
| 23 February | Launch of an international appeal of the Government of Mozambique for emergency relief and initial rehabilitation, in collaboration with the United Nations |
| 24 February | UNDAC team leaves Mozambique |
| 25-27 February | Flood crests on Limpopo River; fresh floods on Save and Buzi Rivers |
| 26 February | French military C160 leaves Maputo |
| 27 February | Mozambique Foreign Minister presides over urgent meeting with United Nations and donors in INGC offices |
| 28 February | Daily ministers meeting moved to INGC offices |
| 29 February | Second UNDAC team arrives in Maputo |
| | Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs named Special Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General |
| 1 March | Flood water in Xai Xai 3 m higher than previous record |
| 2 March | Special Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General arrives in Maputo |
| | Six French military helicopters arrive in Maputo to join airlift operations |
| 3 March | French military C160 arrives in Maputo to join airlift operations |
| | Belgian military C130 arrives in Maputo to join airlift operations |

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| | Joint Logistics Coordination Centre opens within INGC to coordinate the air assets of foreign air forces, one non-governmental organization and commercial charters |
| 6 March | Mozambique's Foreign Minister takes over chair of daily briefings in INGC |
| | British Royal Air Force helicopters arrive (4 Puma in Maputo, 4 Sea King in Beira) for relief operations |
| | Statement by the President of the Security Council |
| | WFP issues a second appeal |
| 7 March | German military contingent arrives (2 C160s in Maputo, 4 helicopters in Beira) |
| 8 March | French military helicopters leave Maputo to go to Madagascar, also affected by flooding |
| 9 March | United States military contingent arrives (3 C130s and 3 helicopters in Maputo, 4 helicopters in Beira) |
| 10 March | The General Assembly, in resolution 54/96 L, calls on the Secretary-General to continue mobilizing and coordinating humanitarian assistance and support for reconstruction |
| | Third UNDAC team arrives in Maputo |
| 12 March | Spanish military contingent arrives (3 helicopters in Maputo) |
| | Belgian military C130 leaves Maputo |
| | French military C160 leaves Maputo |
| 20 March | Portuguese military contingent arrives (1 C130 in Maputo) |
| | British military contingent leaves |
| 22 March | Updated international appeal issued for $100 million |
| | UNICEF issues a second appeal |
| 27 March | United States military contingent leaves |
| 29 March | German military contingent leaves |
| 31 March | Third UNDAC team leaves Maputo |
| 2 April | Spanish military contingent leaves |
| 3 April | Portuguese military contingent leaves |
| 3-4 May | Rome Conference on post-flood reconstruction receives pledges in excess of the amount requested |